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POLITICAL OPTIONS: 1999 AND BEYOND

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INTRODUCTION

The Political Environment

As of the fall of 1998, it is hard to tell whether California has passed through one of the most tumultuous periods in its history, or whether it is only passing through a respite between several more seasons of disaster and upheaval. The natural and man-made disasters have abated, El Nino notwithstanding. Of course, that also means that FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) ceases to pump more money into California than the rest of the 49 states combined, as it did for the first five years of the Clinton administration. But much more importantly, California is over the recession and -- at the state government level -- entering a new era of fighting over budget surpluses, which usually means deciding between Republican tax cuts and Democratic programs.

There were no serious wedge issues on the ballot in 1998, energizing particularly potent constituencies as did Propositions 187 (immigration) and 209 (affirmative action) in recent years, although 227, opposing bilingual education, and 226, making it difficult for unions to use members' money for campaign contributions, undoubtedly had an impact on the outcome of the primaries. Labor certainly determined the Democratic nominee for governor, and probably other statewide races as well. In the end, looking at the results of the primary, the peace and prosperity in the state were reflected in the gubernatorial race that came down in the end to a battle between two rather boring white men: professional politicians whose careers were in the public sector and did not run for office as outsiders ready to change everything.

Whoever wins the election, there will be a change from the last years of the Wilson era, as the Republican incumbent tried to force through appointments to office that would outlive him on the one hand, and appeared to worry less about compromise in the interests of sustaining a working relationship with the Democratically controlled legislature on the other hand. In Wilson's somewhat quixotic behavior in the closing days of the last session, he vetoed a surprising number of bills after having worked with legislators to modify their proposals to meet his objections. If the Governor explained his actions at all, he claimed there were other issues in the bills that disturbed him. It could have been the last shot of a man who had lost interest, taken just for the sake of annoying his opponents, or the actions of someone with his eye on a different constituency altogether, thinking that he will have a better shot at the Republican nomination for president in the year 2000 than he did in 1996. Whatever Pete Wilson's reasons, a new governor of either party -- hoping to serve the full measure of the two-term limit -- would certainly want to build a better relationship with the legislature in order to leave a legacy of his own.

If the economy remains relatively immune from the international crises in Asia, Russia and Latin America, the political options of the coming year will depend on whether or not a Republican or a Democrat won the 1998 gubernatorial contest: an outcome that may depend more on national than state issues, depending on whether the second of three traditional valence issues comes into play: corruption -- assuming lying about a sexual liaison is equated with traditional graft and corruption.¹

One of the most interesting phenomena of the gubernatorial primary campaign was its volatility. The top three Democratic contenders (Al Checchi, Jane Harmon and Gray Davis) traded places at the top and bottom throughout the campaign. Darrel Issa, the early front-runner Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate, lost, in part, because voters tended to confuse him with Democrat Al Checchi, seeing him as yet another super rich businessman with no experience in elective office, coming from no where, offering to lead the largest state in the union.

California's first blanket primary failed to demonstrate the worst of all possible outcomes of voters selecting the weakest candidate in the opposing party as a strategy for winning in November, but it did have some consequences. Issa's opponent, Matt Fong, benefited by picking up both Asian votes that would have been bound to the Democratic ticket in a closed primary, and anti-rich votes -- those who were just so angry at wealthy candidates they would vote for anyone in any party who had to contend with them.

On the issue side, the Indian gaming initiative was the most expensive ballot measure ever, with Nevada gambling and the Christian Right lined up against wealthy gaming tribes on the other. From the Indian perspective, it was a fight to keep this century's equivalent of the buffalo the white men took from them in the last century. From the gambling industry's perspective, it was a threat to the 60 percent of Nevada's clientele that comes from California. Both sides had the deep pockets to run paid ads on radio and television stations for months before the voters ever began thinking about the November election. Whatever the outcome of the initiative, this too -- as so many ballot initiatives -- will likely be in the courts for years. For one thing, the gaming machines around which much of the dispute revolves -- machines that have yet to be invented, but which would have players playing against each other, rather than the house -- have recently been declared illegal by one court. If that ruling is upheld, even the Pala Indian compact -- Governor Wilson's solution -- may be deemed illegal.

What Ifs....

If the balance of power remains the same in the state after November, California is apt to see only a marginally improved relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government. Traditional Republican emphases, such as lower taxes, might be expected to continue, except that the agreement made in the closing days of the 1998 legislative season

¹The third valence issue in American politics is war. Votes on the economy, corruption and war and peace do overcome partisanship.

between Wilson and the Democratic leadership may have pre-empted the opportunity for awhile because it provides for incremental tax cuts if the economy continues at a high enough level for the state to sustain itself.

Issues may turn on the question of just how conservative an agenda a Governor Lungren might propose. Unlike his predecessor Pete Wilson, who started life as a moderate Republican, and moved to the right as his interest in presidential politics rose and he needed conservative credentials to capture the nomination in the primaries, Lungren is a secure, life-long conservative who probably does not want much in the way of government action in any case, and does not need to earn his stripes. There might, therefore, be fewer ballot initiatives designed to keep the faithful in line. On the other hand, these initiatives have generated millions of dollars and become a platform for new players in the system, and they may take on a life of their own, regardless of the ambitions of politicians seeking office.

If Davis wins, and the Democrats are in control of both the administration and the legislature (which itself could change hands if the Clinton scandal works against Democratic turn-out), it will be something California has not seen since Jerry Brown was governor two decades ago. Without the restraints divided government creates, and the tinkering with government on the margins it promotes because neither party had the clout to turn its ideas into policy, California may be in for a spurt traditional liberal activity including rebuilding the state's infrastructure in response to the strong Democratic constituency of organized labor and the lack of attention for many years because of the poor economy; serious reform of health care, particularly of health maintenance organizations; and helping the poor, especially in the aftermath of the major welfare overhaul of the last several years. A Davis win will probably also lead to some steps toward gun control legislation. While crime is down in California, as it is everywhere else, and even concern about crime (generated more by local television coverage than actual experience) is beginning to lessen, the one area where it is still a major concern is about children: youthful violence and especially access to fire arms brought to school.¹ Among the Democratic bills vetoed by Wilson in the last days of the session were several having to do with safety of fire arms.

Whoever wins, a more economically secure state budget may enable Sacramento lawmakers to respond to the growing demands of local governments in the state for major reforms in tax policies such as the use of the sales tax as one of the few opportunities local governments have to generate income. There have been a number of studies on local finance and efforts to mobilize local support for change in the last few years that are apt to come to the surface -- and get action -- if the state budget itself is not in jeopardy.

If either house of the legislature changes hands, the state will probably stay more in the tinkering column, although expectations based solely on issues within California would not suggest a Democratic loss of either the Assembly or the Senate. In general, when the economy is good, voters rarely turn the parties in power out of office.

Prospective Issues

The political line-up in Sacramento notwithstanding, there are any number of unresolved battles simmering throughout the state that will keep on simmering unless and until there is resolution:

- Health care, which could lead to dramatic changes for both institutions (including the insurance industry) and the way the professions are structured.
- The deregulation of the electric industry, was moving along with great stress and strain, but -- depending on the outcome of Proposition 9 on the November ballot--could throw the process into greater uncertainty.
- Crime is down, and marginally less of an issue in the polls, except for concern about children and guns.
- Ethnic relations, particularly in the context of shifting demographics that will leave the state no majority population if measured by race.
- Redistricting that will follow the 2000 census (a battle that is seen now in skirmishes with the federal government in efforts to use sampling techniques to support a more accurate census).
- The continuing erosion of political skill with term limits; and the continuing frustration of many residents with the way things are done.
- Traditional fault lines in California between growth and no-growth advocates that abated in the recession years are starting to appear as both the Bay Area and Southern California regionalists press for greater investment in transportation and other infrastructure necessities for economic growth. The political structure, and the culture that supports the state, remains cumbersome and unworkable for any but the most skilled and sophisticated -- lobbyists and campaign operatives -- who have come to prefer making law by initiative than the old fashioned way through a deliberative legislative process that promotes consensus and coalitions to make sure the pies of public resources are relatively equitably divided.
- The state primary: the consequences of moving it to early March; and the ballot measure on returning it to a party primary, at least for the party presidential nomination.

There is one more issue beyond the simmering pot of potential problems that might be addressed, or at least, become a subject of concern: 1998 was the most expensive political year in California history. The gubernatorial primary saw more money spent by wealthy statewide candidates who were rejected, partly for the money, partly for the negative campaigns they waged, and partly because most voters -- having more faith in the rising economic tide -- were

not looking for an outsider to turn the state around. And even though the controversial ballot measures that tended to divide the population were missing, the ballot measures still were the most expensive ever, with both sides spending millions of dollars on the Indian gaming measure, particularly. The press for campaign finance reform, that almost succeeded in Congress in 1998, may re-emerge in California, which remains without any serious constraints since the last several reform initiatives that passed have been thrown out by the courts.

COMING ISSUES:

Health Care

Health care ranks second only to education as the most important issue. In a recent poll by California HealthCare and the Field Institute, 51 percent of women and seniors ranked it as *the* most important (compared to 43 percent over-all), but 60 percent of Latinos, 64 percent of African Americans, and 66 percent of Californians with incomes under \$20,000 also ranked it as most important. A ranking of specific issues put the availability of preventive health for children first, followed by affordable insurance, access to specialists, care being available to everyone regardless of their ability to pay, and an appeals system outside the health care provider.² Some of these issues could be addressed under current circumstances, such as extending health care to children with low-income, for which the federal government has provided \$2.6 billion, but the state says it will use only \$500 million because it has limited eligibility more strictly than the federal standards.³ Other issues will require a more comprehensive change of policy. Given the political leanings of those most concerned -- women, minorities, and the poor -- health care should clearly be a very high priority for Democrats.

There are 6 ½ million people in the state without health insurance of any kind, and many others who are qualified for coverage in a patchwork quilt with different programs that help different people at different times and different ages. There are people who are qualified, but who are not aware of it, such as children whose parents are ineligible, although the state has made some effort to notify them of it. While the percentage of uninsured in the United States as a whole reached 15.6 percent in 1997, it reached 21.5 percent in California.⁴ The categories of those most likely to be without health care in America today are also those most likely to live in California: Hispanics; those working for small businesses; immigrants; and the children of immigrants. The population least likely to have health care are young adults between 18 and 24, who are caught between whatever care there is for dependent children, and employment with companies who provide it for their workers regardless of their youthful belief in their invincibility.

One explanation for the lack of insurance among Hispanics, according to Luis Arteaga of the Latino Issues Forum in San Francisco, is the history of distrust in government in general, and the anti-immigrant feeling expressed in the state's passage of a number of ballot initiatives in the past few years, which means that they would be less likely to seek it out. Another part of the problem is the concentration of that community in the parts of the economy least likely to

provide it: blue-collar and service-sector jobs.⁵ Whatever the reason, from the point of view of providing an efficient, caring system, California's healthcare is a growing nightmare for individuals and health care providers.

HMOs -- health maintenance organizations -- are one of the biggest issues in health care since the nation began moving to managed care out of fear off a Clinton overhaul of the entire industry in his first term. The issue took on renewed focus when the state began its response to welfare reform, moving the poor from Medi-Cal, the fee-for-service health care system for the poor, and into HMOs with the hope that increased preventive care will lower costs over-all. The new system is based on patient enrollment rather than fee-for-service, and for the state's largest provider -- Los Angeles County -- it requires an enrollment of 150,000 patients, which was supposed to happen by April of 1998. Only half the target was reached by June, leaving an estimated deficit of \$6.9 million. The loss is apt to grow if there is no substantial change in enrollment. Since the summer, when the federal government redefined its regulations regarding payment to HMOs for Medicare, there is also been an alarming trend of HMOs dropping out of the Medicare coverage across the country, including California.

While managed care is the over-all focus of state healthcare policy, what was once a vocation has become an industry. As for-profit hospitals and managed-care facilities seek to grow, they look to the stock market for the necessary capital, which then forces them to show an ever-growing profit margin, and that, in turns, means cutting costs. Health care providers all over the country are driven by competition to reach the lowest cost, a problem that has been compounded in the past few years in California by the large pool of the uninsured. It has reached such proportions that even the insurers are concerned that there are not enough people in the system to spread the cost without everyone making some kind of charitable contribution.

A lynchpin of the cost cutting effort has been in the role of nurses. Nursing is a woman's profession that was traditionally over-worked and underpaid, but as managed care facilities have come to rely more and more on nursing rather than doctors to perform a variety of roles, the nursing profession has expanded to play a larger role as nurse-practitioners, midwives, and other variations of independent professionals. Each step has added more educational requirements and -- because there are so many more professional opportunities beyond nursing and teaching as the only respectable roles for women -- there is a constant shortage of qualified nurses. According to the California Nursing Association, 95 percent of its membership is female, half the RNs are over 45, and 30 percent over 50. California ranks lowest in the proportion of RNs to the population of all the 50 states and the District of Columbia, which is first at 1,710 per 100,000 compared to 566 per 100,000.⁶

Normally, shortages of workers lead to higher wages and better working conditions, but since part of the cause is the need for cost-cutting in the first place -- and part of it due to women not entering, or leaving the profession altogether -- there are added tensions. As nurses have been demanding better working conditions and higher pay, hospitals have been hiring people with lower levels of certification, and cutting the number of nurses in general. In the last few years, the CNA has turned into more of a labor union than a professional association. It filed charges

with the National Labor Relations Board against Kaiser Permanente, seeking access to the nation's largest HMO's patient-care standards, which eventually led to six strikes against Kaiser facilities in Northern California, costing the company \$10 million a day and eventual release of the information. It is an issue that will continue to exert pressure on nursing, and health care throughout the state until it is addressed.

Although issues of pay and working conditions are core problems, there will continue to be momentum toward increasing the independence of nurses from physicians. There are, for instance, nearly twice the number of nurse practitioners in the state as there was ten years ago, even if they have not achieved the level of independence their colleagues have in much of the rest of the country. Professional issues include who has authority to write prescriptions under California law, and how nurses are trained and educated in the state.

The State Senate passed a resolution in 1998 to do a study that will make recommendations on how to deal with health care issues in general. When the study is released, it is expected to have a significant impact on legislative proposals. Other solutions, such as a single payer system are, as one advocate put it, "resting" at the moment, awaiting the outcome of the study.

Deregulation

In 1996, California became a leader in the effort to deregulate the electric industry. It was a controversial issue then, and remains so today. The goal of deregulation was to provide consumers of electricity -- just about everyone -- with a free market opportunity to buy electricity. The delivery and transmission would stay the same, i.e., with whatever utility already provides the lines and serves the community. Deregulating the power source would be similar to the way the telephone system works: the telephone wires stay the same, but consumers can purchase their long distance phone services from competing companies. Opponents of deregulation, of course, pointed to the fact that even though the old system provided a rented phone -- with a busy signal as the only amenity -- it was significantly cheaper. Today, we buy telephones that frequently fail to work, there are a host of amenities -- all of which cost more, and bills that used to average \$10 or \$20 a month, now average \$80 or \$90. Nonetheless, the legislature passed deregulation of electricity with assurances the consumers would get a 10 percent bill reduction, to be overseen by the state's Public Utilities Commission. It began with the private utilities, with publicly-owned utilities scheduled to follow a few years after.

Proposition 9, formally entitled "The Utility Rate Reduction and Reform Act," challenged the ability of the private utilities to pass on to consumers the stranded costs of \$6 billion worth of bonds issued by the utilities in connection to their investments in alternative power sources: nuclear plants, coal, etc. The investments were made in the 1970s, at the direction of the PUC, when the nation was facing a major gas crisis. The Prop 9 proponents -- who represent the same coalition that backed Proposition 13 and similar tax reduction measures, as well as Harvey Rosenberg, who authored the roll-back on insurance rates several years ago -- argued that the

utilities were providing a 10 percent cut -- as required -- but were adding on a 20 percent charge to cover the repayment of the bonds, making a sham of the process.

The issue has relatively little to do with the electricity market and a great deal to do with government finance, particularly at the local level. The opponents of Prop 9 argued that the surcharge was part of the deregulation agreement negotiated in the legislation (AB 1890) in 1996, allowing the utilities to combine the long-term nuclear costs, etc., and borrow money to pay the debts at lower rates -- and that is where the savings came from enabling them to provide the 10 percent cut. Prop 9 supporters argue that the utilities were too influential in writing the terms in the legislation, giving themselves too large a piece of the pie and that a fairer deal would have taken the consumers' costs into account more equitably.

The problem has less to do with the immediate differences on ratepayer bills, and much more to do with local government bond ratings. While estimates vary as to the probabilities, the state could be stuck with the bill and/or selling bonds could become much more expensive for local governments if the ratings drop.

No matter what happens with Proposition 9 in November, the odds are the issue will be in the court for years, with a potential increase in taxes and a drop in spending on other services. Another argument made by the opponents is that research and development funds will be cut as the private utilities write off at least \$6 billion in losses associated with their investment in power plants.² The time will come when alternative energy sources will be necessary, but -- they argue -- who can afford to do the work necessary to develop it?

Crime and the Law

Crime has ranked number one among poll respondent for years, even when the statistics suggested it was declining in remarkable proportions. Because of it, however, California passed some of the most restrictive laws -- including the three strikes initiative -- in the country, and is likely to be spending more on prisons and inmates because of it in the years ahead. On the other hand, there two areas, at least, where the state seems to be going backwards in separate battles with the Governor: the disarray in the state bar, which was seriously curtailed in its funding last year in an on-going dispute; and gun control legislation, which Wilson vetoed even after proponents thought they had worked out a compromise with him. One required safety locks on handguns, and the other changed the definition of "assault weapon" to make more guns illegal.

In a Los Angeles County survey of residents on children's issues by the Field Research Corporation in the summer of 1998, the greatest fear was children bringing guns to school,

²Estimates of the losses range from \$6 billion to \$28 billion.

followed by the safety of children going to and from school.⁷ While both issues doubtless reflect recent dramatic national stories of fatal shootings by children in several communities -- and overall 68 percent of respondents believe the county is still a healthy place to raise children -- statistics of gun violence within the county published by Women Against Gun Violence reveals 187 deaths of children under 18 due to gun violence in 1997, which was a doubling of the figure a year before.⁸ Overall, the largest number of the 1203 residents who lost their lives to guns was in the 25 to 34 age range (over 250). Not surprisingly, deaths drop dramatically after the age of 34. According to the Women Against Gun Violence study, LA County, "which represents one-fourth of the state's population, accounted for nearly one half of California's firearm fatalities." It is interesting to note that gun deaths in the city of Los Angeles declined by 22 percent from the previous year, perhaps a consequence of settled gang turf battles, but also because there are probably significantly fewer registered guns and gun dealers in the city according to the Los Angeles Police Department.⁹ Latinos accounted for 60 percent of the deaths, African Americans 25 percent, Caucasians 10 percent, and Asian Americans 5 percent. Over 90 percent of the deaths were homicides.¹⁰

Given the fears, the change of administrations, and the growing acceptance by the American public that guns are a problem -- which in itself may be a consequence of changing demographics¹¹ -- it is probable that gun control will become at least a legislative priority in the 1998-99 session. It is a special concern of Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa, who sponsored the safety lock legislation for several years, especially when the technology exists to make guns more difficult for anyone but the owner to fire them.

The second issue about the State Bar Association has been brewing for several years, but reached a crisis in last year when the Bar was forced to cut its staff and most of its services -- including the handling of complaints. Governance is one area of dispute: Wilson would have restructured it to resemble the Medical Board of California, a 19 member board, of whom 17 are appointed by the governor; as opposed to the current 15 elected lawyer representatives. Other issues would limit the Bar to certain "core" functions, including areas in which it could lobby, and legal services to the poor. The Governor's proposal would also have cut the dues members pay annually to the Bar.

Although there were several attempts to form a bi-partisan coalition within the legislature, and find common ground with Pete Wilson, the State Bar will remain in near limbo until some resolution is worked out between a new governor and the legislature.

Ethnic Relations

While immigration to the state continued unabated during the 1990s -- even during the recession -- the shift in demographics has not been without considerable strain on the older population who have taken out their frustration at the ballot box in one initiative after another aimed against some aspect of the changing culture. While the issue could have been said to reached a crisis stage with the 1992 riots in Los Angeles at the height of the recession, the backlash of the Old Guard took place subsequent state initiatives in 1994, 1996, and 1998

designed to curtail illegal immigration, affirmative action, and educational programs for non-English speaking children. The welfare reform in Congress that took place in 1996-97, further threatened both legal and illegal immigrants, and reflected the hostility of the native population to the changing culture. Still, immigrants came, and even more are likely if there is a serious worldwide recession. The demographic shift would continue -- even without the immigration -- because of the high birthrate, particularly among Latinos who are the largest single group coming to the state.

While there is no question that the diversity is one of the state's greatest assets -- accounting for over half of California's in-migration since the immigration laws were changed in the mid-1960s -- the integration of each of these large, but separate, communities into the state's political culture will continue to challenge advocates on all sides. Two-thirds of those who entered in the 1970s, and almost that proportion in the 1990s, settled in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, with nearly half of all immigrants living in Los Angeles County making the area the most ethnically diverse city in the world.¹²

While race relations in Southern California lack the intense bitterness that characterizes relations in many other parts of the country, there is conflict, and there is an expectation that it will continue to grow as communities grow older and come to expect more.³ Especially if they come to feel themselves victimized by the older white establishment. All of the 1998 gubernatorial candidates, for instance, tried to distance themselves from the one potential wedge issue -- proposition 227, the bilingual initiative promoted by former gubernatorial candidate Ron Unz in the spring primary, that sought to eliminate most of the state's programs for non-English speaking immigrant children. It was particularly important for Dan Lungren, who made a great effort to win Latino support by opposing it, in order to win at least some of the support for the G.O.P. that was driven out of the party in the last Wilson term. Even though the Unz initiative passed overwhelmingly, it is being implemented in a halting manner at best, reflecting the fact that the opponents tended to be those involved: teachers and school systems, in particular, who opposed it; as well many immigrants. It is an issue to which I will refer again in the context of making law through the initiative process.

While the Old Guard still out-votes the new minorities, and does not share many of the same interests, the nature of the dialogue *between* the minority groups is tempered by the shared sense of assault brought on by the wedge propositions. Even though the minority coalitions failed to win at the poll, they did succeed in demonstrating a common vision, building a working relationship among the leaders of the different communities. In time, however, the competition between them will grow for jobs, for seats in the universities, and for resources, especially resources devoted to the schools. And most especially, for avenues of political mobility:

³There is a tendency for first generation immigrants to regard any discrimination they encounter as a consequence of being an immigrant, rather than to any ethnic or racial differences. Second generations, particularly those growing up in the post civil rights era, are more likely to see it as the consequence of being a minority.

legislative seats at all levels. The contest for State Senate between former Assembly leader Richard Katz and Los Angeles City Councilman Richard Alarcon -- won in the end by 39 votes by Mr. Alarcon -- was looked seen as the beginning of a shift in representation that came dangerously close to open ethnic conflict. Leaders in both communities (Jewish and Latino), as well as others, watched with concern and agreed to try to avoid problems in the future, particularly in elections between Latinos and African Americans. Few are confident it can be managed given the realities of elections, but the effort will be important.

Perhaps the most difficult area will be entry into the civil service. While affirmative action was limited under Pete Wilson, government jobs have always been the first line of entry for women and minorities because of the rationality of competitive exams. The problem is that those who hold them, keep them for much longer periods than elected politicians keep their offices. When the population changes, the civil servants become strangers. It was that conflict in the schools in New York City in 1968 -- between Jewish teachers and African American parents -- that set off a bitter relationship that remains to this day. African Americans make up 20 percent of the government workforce in Los Angeles, while now representing about 10 percent of the population.

By the year 2000 -- and the census and redistricting that will follow -- many of the immigrant communities will show growing proportions in the population. African American representation in elected office will be seriously challenged by Latinos, while Asians are apt to find representation difficult because they tend to be dispersed in their residences. Insofar as they are dominant in suburban communities, or in San Francisco, they will do better. Koreatown in Los Angeles, for example, is 60 percent Latino; Chinatown -- the most densely Asian area in the city is only 50 percent Asian, 38 percent Chinese. The challenge for California will be to see the shift in representation with a minimum of ethnic conflict during the campaigns.

The 2000 Census and Redistricting

The 1998 election is important because it sets the stage for the election in 2000, and the census that will follow that has implications both for representation in Congress and the distribution of federal funds on a per capita basis. The census will lead to an increase in the size of the California delegation to Washington -- already the largest in the nation. But the question is by how much? The city of Los Angeles, which filed several suits against the federal government to insure a more accurate count than a straight enumeration of the population allows. Under the current system, all residents are supposed to receive a census form through the mail. In addition, the government hires census takers to actually improve the count by knocking on the doors of those who have not returned the forms. At least that's the theory. In fact, the urban and rural poor are under-counted, and suburban areas are generally over-counted. Estimates in Los Angeles are that the 1990 under-count cost the city \$12 million a year through the decade. The solution proposed for the last census was to correct the count through the use of statistical sampling: interviewing a small percentage of the non-filers and calculating the total numbers from that -- the way polls are taken.

Politically, of course, the count translates to an undercount of Democratic constituents in the cities, and therefore, an over-weighting of Republican constituents in the suburbs. The Republican Administration in 1989, opposed sampling against the wishes of the Democratically-controlled Congress on the grounds that the Constitution calls for an actual enumeration. The issue turns on the meaning of the phrase. Supporters of sampling argue, for example, that the 18th Century word "actual" was related to the French and means "real," as in *actualité*.

In 1999, with the parties reversed in the legislative and executive branches of government, the Administration wants to use sampling, and Congress opposes it. The issue will be resolved by the Supreme Court, at least until the law is changed.

The allocation of federal money will become even more of an issue if the current trend of the federal government taking in more in taxes from California than it returns in spending, and local funding continues to be constrained by the limitations in raising tax dollars imposed by Proposition 13 and its successors becomes more obvious. California has been a "donor" state relative to tax dollars for more than a decade according to the California Institute for Federal Policy Research.¹³ For a state whose defense industry made it a "receiver" for decades, the fact that it now ranks 35th in receiving, and houses more than 12 percent of the population -- much of it immigrant and poor -- will become more obvious and more pressing. All the more so if devolution continues to guide federal policy.

Term Limits and the Decline of Political Experience

Although most observers and participants in the political process decry the consequences of term limits, the state's political culture continues to foster the ideal of amateur politicians. The opponents of term limits grow more and more convinced it is an insane system as it takes effect leaving fewer and fewer members of the state legislature with any experience in government. Even though it has probably already peaked as an issue -- given the withdrawal of its advocates from their own initiative in the spring primary because it was unconstitutional, and their failure to mount a campaign for it for the November ballot as they promised -- it cannot be changed unless it is resubmitted to the voters. Given the low standing politicians typically have, undoubtedly lowered even further by the obsessive focus in Washington on the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal despite strong approval ratings for the President, there is no reason for optimism that Californians would reverse themselves on the issue in less than a decade.

The problem, from the perspective of term limit opponents, is that government is so complex and difficult to follow in general, it is very hard to demonstrate any given cause is related to any given effect. Nonetheless, the decline of experience and time to bring about comprehensive legislation that engages all the interests in any given issue may force California to rely more and more upon the initiative process as frustrated advocates do not find effective leaders in the state assembly and senate able to solve their problems or advance their interests. Even those who have risen to leadership under the current system recognize their own limitations relative to predecessors who had the time to learn the ways of the process and the strengths and weaknesses of the players in government and out.

From the perspective of term limit advocates, the opportunity is opened to many more potential leaders and --because of the short time available to them-- requires a faster schedule. Given the changing demographics in the state, California doubtless will see --and already has seen-- the representation of new groups at a faster pace than ever was the case before. There are, for instance, a far greater number of Latinos in government than could ever have been expected before given the average length of tenure before term limits were passed by initiative in 1990.⁴

The term limits movement has probably peaked, judging from the failure of its advocates to put yet another initiative on the ballot in November, as they assured their supporters they would when they realized the unconstitutionality of their primary proposal in 1998. The peak can also be measured by the selection of candidates who came from the system, running on experience, rather than outsiders eager to change it.

Growth versus No-Growth

The prosperity in the state and the country has a great to do with the decline of anxiety about politicians, but it would be a mistake to think that frustration with government is just a passing phenomenon in California. There are fault lines in the state's political culture that reflect deep divisions. It is often noted that many migrated to California to build a perfect life for themselves. They came for the sun and the opportunity to live in single family homes, with their own cars, and their own access to the ocean and the mountains. As the population filled in, the conflict between advocates of growth and no-growth/environmentalists set the stage for even deeper divisions of political philosophy from radical left to radical right. The recession brought a halt to some of the battles, but now that it is over, developers are once again looking to a bigger future, and the multi-national economy beckons to make several regions in the state central to trade and manufacture, the lines are again being drawn.

Hostility to change can be seen in the secession movement rippling across Los Angeles propelled by older residents of the San Fernando Valley. They believe they are not heard downtown in city hall, that they have no access, and that they are not getting their fair share. The truth is, most areas of the city believe they are not getting their "fair share." Secessionists don't want more growth that would lead to a thinner pie, or an infringement of their property, and especially their property values. They fight most development and certainly oppose any extension of the public infrastructure such as the airports or the freeway system. The interests of the federal and state governments in building a greater future notwithstanding, they may well be overcome by the determination of local residents to hold on to their dreams at all cost.

⁴There are 14 Latinos in the State Assembly out of 80, and 4 in the Senate out of 40. Not quite proportionate, but certainly greater representation than might have been expected before term limits.

The Primary

There are two issues about the primary related to the selection of presidential nominees. The first -- a perennial problem for the state -- is that the traditional June primary usually comes too late in the process for California to have much of an impact on who the nominees will be. The second is that the open primary, passed by initiative in 1996, does not have provision for the selection of presidential party nominees.

For many years, the presidential season opened with the Iowa caucus and moved to the first primary in New Hampshire. Both are small states, yet they have an inordinate impact on what is sometimes called "Big Mo:" the momentum a candidate gets from winning early, enabling him to raise the funds and continue the campaign to the end. Big states have objected to the weight the small states get in that choice, and are always tempted to move their primaries up, but the consequences for candidates would be overwhelming. It is cheap to run a campaign in a small state. It is *very* expensive to run in a big state. Al Checchi spent \$40 million running in the primary for governor in 1998. Not only would the costs prohibit just possible candidates, it would almost surely limit it to very wealthy individuals and obvious front-runners. California passed legislation moving the primary to early March. If New York follows suit, the impact will be even greater in limiting the choice.

The second issue is the blanket primary that allows voters to make a choice for office among the candidates of every party. Republicans have argued for years that the rules of the Democratic party, which they can change at meetings of the Democratic National Committee -- unlike G.O.P. rules that can be changed only at the quadrennial convention. -- have the effect of the tail wagging the dog because the courts have always held that the national party's selection process for national office supersedes a state's rights to control elections. Provisions can, of course, be made to limit voters to their declared party in a presidential primary, but it will probably not be resolved until the courts rule on the matter.

Endnotes

1. "1998 Los Angeles County Children and Youth Issues Survey," Field Research Corporation, commissioned by California Community Foundation, July 13, 1998.
2. California HealthCare and Field Institute, released September 14, 1998.
3. Editorial, *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1998.
4. Alissa J. Rubin, "Percentage of Uninsured Is Rising, U.S. Says," *Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 1998., p. A3.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Sigrid Bathen, "Nurses under Siege," *California Journal*, August, 1998, p. 10, 13.
7. Released by the California Community Foundation, July 13, 1998.
8. "The State of Gun Violence in Los Angeles County, 1997," released by Women Against Gun Violence, August, 1998.
9. Ray Tessler, "Handgun Sales in State Sink to 25-Year Low," *Los Angeles Times*, October 4, 1998, A-1, 33-34. According to the LAPD, gun dealer license holders dropped from 1,400 in 1994, to 185 today. The number of commercial dealers dropped from 125 to 80, at least partly in response to city regulations that require gun shop owners to maintain a \$1 million liability insurance policy.
10. The State of Gun Violence in Los Angeles County.
11. Tessler, citing a 1996 survey released by the Police Foundation showing men who came of age just after World War Two were most inclined to become gun owners, followed by baby boomers, and that younger cohorts are buying guns at slower rates. It may also be that gun owners are less likely to admit it to pollsters, suggesting at least a drop in the acceptability of owning guns.
12. Georges Vernez, "Immigrants: Attitudes and their Ties Home," in Gregory F. Treverton and Abraham F. Lowenthal, eds., *Making the Most of Southern California's Global Engagement*, forthcoming.
13. "California Capital Hill Bulletin, Volume 5, Bulletin 28, September 3, 1998.